

# Department of Human Services

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## Articles in Today's Clips Monday, August 13, 2007

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JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
LANSING

JOHN D. CHERRY, JR.  
LT. GOVERNOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 13, 2007

Contact: Michelle Begnoche  
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**Granholm Taps ACCESS Founder  
to Lead Department of Human Services**  
*Ismael Ahmed an expert on welfare reform, immigration*

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today announced the appointment of Ismael Ahmed to succeed Marianne Udow as director of the Michigan Department of Human Services.

“Ismael has a wealth of experience in responding to the needs of people, and we are so fortunate to have someone with his leadership skills and compassion moving the Department of Human Services forward,” Granholm said. “Ismael shares our goals of encouraging strong families and helping citizens become self-sufficient, and we look forward to his leadership on these issues and more.”

Ahmed co-founded the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), an influential Arab-American human services organization in the United States offering over 90 different programs with more than 900,000 client contacts annually. He was appointed executive director in 1983.

Under his leadership, ACCESS received the Exemplary Community Service Program Award from the state of Michigan. The award recognized the efforts of ACCESS in delivering outstanding service, programs, and commitment to the advancement of its community.

Ahmed is a contributing author to “Arabs in America: Myths and Reality” and is considered a national expert on immigration, welfare reform, and Arab American issues. He also has written for the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Publication, “Arab American Political Participation in the United States.”

“I am honored that Governor Granholm has given me the opportunity to serve in this important role,” said Ahmed. “The Department of Human Services does so much to bring help and hope to people in need; as director, I look forward to working with the department and its partners to reduce poverty and improve the lives of children and vulnerable adults in our state. I am particularly interested in building and strengthening the statewide and local collaborations established under Marianne Udow, which can expand the ability of government to reduce poverty, help citizens support their families, and protect children and vulnerable adults.”

(more)

Ismael Ahmed is a 1975 graduate of the University of Michigan with a bachelor of arts degree in secondary education and a minor in sociology. He resides in Dearborn with his wife Margaret and has five children and a grandson.

Ahmed was appointed by Granholm to serve as regent of Eastern Michigan University, a post he will resign.

The Michigan Department of Human Services is the state's second largest agency and is organized under the tenets of the state Social Welfare Act and Child Protection Law. Its nearly 10,000 employees administer a \$4 billion-plus annual budget, including the federal TANF grant and Food Assistance Program and determine Medicaid eligibility. It is the state's child and family services agency and administers child and adult protective services, foster care, adoptions, juvenile justice, domestic violence, and child support programs. It licenses adult foster care, child day care, and child welfare facilities. Its staff serves 1.5 million medical assistance cases and 1.2 million cash and food assistance cases statewide.

# # #

# PRESS & GUIDE

## Ahmed in line for state post

By Sean Delaney  
, Press & Guide Newspapers

DEARBORN - Ismael Ahmed, executive director of ACCESS, has been selected as a top contender to replace Marianne Udow next month as director of the state's Department of Human Services (DHS).

But state officials are remaining tight-lipped about whether the longtime Dearborn resident has already accepted the sought-after position.

"As I understand it, the governor's office is expected to formally announce a replacement by the end of the month," said Maureen Sorbet, a spokeswoman for the DHS.

The DHS is Michigan's public assistance, child and family welfare agency. The department directs the operations of public assistance and service programs through a network of more than 100 county Department of Human Service offices throughout the state.

Ahmed, 60, is a 1975 graduate of the University of Michigan with a bachelor's degree in secondary education with a minor in sociology. He currently resides in Dearborn with his wife, Peggy. They have five adult children.

He was named executive director of ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services) — a Dearborn-based non-profit organization that provides programs and services to more than 50,000 individuals annually — in 1983 and has been the recipient of several awards, including:

- American Association of Community Colleges Alumni of the Year Award (2002)
- New Detroit Bridging the Gap Individual Award (1999)
- University of Michigan Alumni of the Year Award (1994)
- Outstanding Leadership Award for the U.S. Census Bureau (1992)
- Points of Light Award presented by the White House (1992).

In addition to serving as executive director of ACCESS, Ahmed has also served as vice-chair of New Detroit, Inc., as a member of the Dearborn Community Arts Council Advisory Board and the University of Michigan-Dearborn Advisory Committee, as well as the Channel 56 Television Board of Trustees.

He formerly co-hosted a WDET-FM program focusing on world music, and is credited with spearheading the founding and construction of the Arab American National Museum, a \$20 million project located on Michigan Avenue across from City Hall.

In January, Ahmed was appointed by Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm to serve as a regent on the board of Eastern Michigan University.

Udow has served as director of the DHS since 2003, and is a 1978 graduate of the University of Michigan's School of Public Health. Prior to her appointment by Gov. Granholm, Udow served as senior vice president of health care products and provider services for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

Udow formally announced her resignation as director of the state DHS last week, and will leave Aug. 31. Following her departure, she will serve as director of the Center for Healthcare Quality and Transformation, a joint venture between Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and the University of Michigan Health System.

"Marianne has been a tremendous leader for the DHS," Sorbet said. "She has moved the department a long way toward achievement the governor's goals, specifically in the area of child welfare. She will be missed."

Contact Staff Writer Sean Delaney at (313) 359-7820 or [sdelaney@heritage.com](mailto:sdelaney@heritage.com).

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Crain's Detroit Business

August 13, 2007

## **Source: Ismael Ahmed to be state human-services chief**

**Ismael Ahmed**, executive director of the Dearborn-based **Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services**, has agreed to accept an appointment by Gov. **Jennifer Granholm** to be director of the **Michigan Department of Human Services**, *Crain's* learned last week.

He would replace Human Services Director **Marianne Udow**, who leaves Aug. 31 to be the director of the **Center for Healthcare Quality & Transformation**, a new joint venture between Detroit-based **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan** and the Ann Arbor-based **University of Michigan Health System**.

Liz Boyd, Granholm's press secretary, said she could not confirm the appointment.

UPDATING THE NEWS

Sunday, August 12, 2007

## **Mother charged in death of son, 15**

The story so far: Teresa Lea-Anne Kleine, 36, the mother of a Sturgis teenager who died in April, was charged in July with involuntary manslaughter, child abuse, maintaining a drug house and three counts of delivery of a controlled substance, according to court records. Her son, Daniel Jacob Shepherd, 15, was found dead in her home after he and other minors were allowed to smoke marijuana there. Police said Kleine failed to seek medical help for Shepherd when it was needed.

What's new: Kleine was bound over Aug. 1 on all charges.

What's next: A St. Joseph County Circuit Court arraignment is scheduled to be held on Aug. 20. A trial date will then be set.

The Detroit News

Monday, August 13, 2007

Oakland County

Rochester Hills

## **Charge of failure to report suspected abuse**

A middle school teacher has been charged with failure to report suspected child abuse involving a student at Hart Middle School. James Richard Cromie was charged last week in Rochester Hills 52-3 District Court with a misdemeanor related to an incident in May when a student's complaint about abuse at home went unreported for several days for unknown reasons. Under state law, education, health care professionals and others are required to promptly report suspected child abuse. Cromie, who is free on bond, pleaded not guilty and is scheduled to be back in court Sept. 19.





## Agencies funding new 'Toddler Court'

Hometown Headlines

**FLINT**

**THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION**

Saturday, August 11, 2007

**By Paul Janczewski**

**Journal Staff Writer**

GENESEE COUNTY - A local effort aimed at reducing recurring infant abuse and neglect will receive \$15,000 from two agencies as seed money to implement the project.

The Community Foundation of Greater Flint gave \$10,000 to Genesee County for the Maltreated Infant Mental Health Project.

And the program, also known as the Infant Toddler Court, is receiving a \$5,000 contribution from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan.

The project is led by Genesee County Chief Probate Judge Robert E. Weiss.

Based on a model program in Miami, Fla., the court's goal is to reduce the cycle of abuse and neglect and address the needs of mistreated infants and toddlers and their families involved in the child welfare system.

Officials said the Miami program has received national attention for its success. Three years of data there showed gains in parent-child relationships and no new reports of abuse and neglect from families involved in the program.

Weiss has developed a court team here, involving a number of agencies, to aid the project.

Details: (810) 257-3554.

- Paul Janczewski

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Article published Aug 12, 2007

GUEST COLUMNIST

Where is the village for today's children?

Last month on July 14 at Claude Evans Park in Battle Creek, it was Family Day. The theme was "Reclaiming the Village," based on the African proverb that it takes a village to raise a child.

I don't know where you personally stand on the matter, but I for one agree wholeheartedly. In my opinion, that's part of what's wrong with our young people - we've lost the village!

When I was a youngster in the late 1950s and even into my teens during the early 1960s, you had your parents plus much more. You had Mama Sadie next door, Mama Reece around the corner, Mama and Daddy Scott down the street, and Daddy Frank would be in his garden one block over. These wonderful people saw or heard *everything* that we kids did.

These were not blood-relatives, but they loved and cared for me as if they were. Not only me, all the children in the neighborhood were under their watchful eyes and listening ears. They played an important role in raising us as extensions of our parents, and we kids knew that if they told us something, it was just like our own mother or father talking.

When I did something wrong or if I was running around with the "wrong crowd," Mama Reece would get that belt, "discuss" it with me and wait for my parents to come home from work. She then would have me by the hand, telling my parents what I had done and I got that same "discussion" again with them. That scenario was played out by all my neighborhood mamas and daddies with no talk of child abuse or calling 911 because someone chastised your child. Parents were grateful someone could be their eyes and ears when they weren't around. They were thankful somebody cared enough about their child to help keep them on the right track.

That was then and this is now. We live in different times with different ways to raise children. These days you can't even whip your own child without being called a child abuser. Forget about a concerned neighborhood doing that, with the possibility of going to jail being their fate for caring. Somebody told kids they have rights and some think they don't have to listen to adults. I'm old-school and I believe in talking and reasoning with the child first. If that fails, I'm going to see about getting the point across from the other end.

Discipline and abuse are two different things. People confuse them far too often. Bend the sapling while it's young. Spare the rod and spoil the child. If there is some silver in your hair, you are familiar with those sayings. People of my generation were raised with those two philosophies in mind, and I think we turned out OK!

I think about my neighborhood mamas and daddies often, for all have passed away, but what they did for me lives on because I'm here! Had it not been for my village, I don't know what would have happened to me. My parents gave me a strong sense of right and wrong and how to treat people, as well as unconditional love. Naturally, they were my biggest influence in becoming the person I am, and the better person I'm striving to become.

The village kept me safe when my parents weren't around. It gave me constant reinforcement of family values and a sense of belonging. It also felt good to know people other than my parents really cared and loved me. The village never left, we left it. We got caught up in our busy lives with all our technological advances and let the children slip through the cracks. Laws are different now regarding children than when I was a child, as is society's mindset. Young people today, generally speaking, don't have respect or manners for adults and seniors like they should. That's our fault. How are they going to know if we don't teach them?

We need the village today more than ever with all the things kids are exposed to these days. Where is the village? Where it's always been, inside each of us.

*James J. Smith is a lifelong Battle Creek resident, a free-lance writer and a poet. He is the author of "Stirrings from My Soul."*

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Published August 12, 2007

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## Charity HOG ride to benefit CASA kids

DIMONDALE — The Capital Area Harley Owners Group (H.O.G. Chapter 2880) is inviting all riders to take part in the 2nd Annual Charity HOG Ride for CASA Kids, on Aug. 18 at 11 a.m.

Riders will again this year leave from Capital Harley-Davidson and ride to Tyden Park in Hastings where they will be treated to a picnic lunch. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. at 9550 Woodlawn Drive in Dimondale. Registration Fee is \$20.

Honorable Judge Michael Skinner will lead the ride to Hastings. Riders will be escorted through the picturesque countryside of Eaton and Barry Counties by volunteer Eaton County Sheriff Deputies.

Tyden Park near downtown Hastings will be the destination, where riders will be served a picnic lunch on the banks of the Thornapple River.

Lunch will feature HOG (pulled pork) sandwiches prepared by local chef Steve Schondelmeyer. Other items on the menu will be provided by CASA volunteers and board members. There will also be a 50-50 raffle to help make the event a success.

Proceeds of the ride are to benefit CASA for Kids, Inc., of Barry and Eaton Counties, who recruit and train volunteers to help represent the best interest of foster children in the two counties.

Each year in Eaton and Barry Counties, an average of 150 children reside in foster care due to neglect and abuse.

The average length of stay for children is over 18 months. During that time, assigned CASA volunteers dedicate approximately 10 hours a month to monitor the well being of their "CASA kids" to ensure that they receive the services needed while the parents work to reunite with the children.

— *From CASA for Kids, Inc.*

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**Grand Rapids Press**

**Letters for August 12**

Sunday, August 12, 2007

## **Foster care solutions**

The Press' Aug. 4 editorial "Fixing foster care" helped increase awareness of the pervasive problem of child abuse in Michigan. Just in Kent County, Children's Protective Services' staff received 10,245 complaints of child abuse in 2006.

However, I disagree with some of your assumptions and proposed solutions to these abused children staying in foster care as long term "orphans of the state."

Fortunately in Kent County, our child welfare agencies and judges do not accept your "sad fact that once children reach age 11, there is little chance of them being adopted out of foster care."

An average of 190 foster children are adopted in our community each year. During the past three years, 26 percent or 144 of those 570 adoptive children have been age 11 or older. Considerable credit for this achievement belongs to The Press and your 30 years of featuring older foster children waiting for adoptive homes in your "Sunday's Child" articles.

We also have renowned adoption agencies in our community like Bethany Christian Services, Catholic Social Services and D.A. Blodgett Services who employ skilled experts and operate outstanding programs specializing in effectively serving older adoptive children and their families.

Rather than removing fewer children from abusive parents, our state needs to fund more skilled adoptive specialists to recruit and place foster children of all ages in safe and secure adoptive homes. Michigan is "making orphans out of too many children" because there are too few skilled adoption staff to place and support them in permanent homes.

NICHOLAS J. KOSTER, Adoption Supervisor/Hearing Referee, 17th Circuit Court, Family Division/Grand Rapids

## Governor Granholm and Diverse Advocates to Call on Congress and The White House to Support Kids' Health Coverage

Press conference at DMC Children's Hospital will focus on need to reauthorize and adequately fund the State Children's Health Insurance Program

DETROIT, Aug. 13 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- State leaders and children's advocates will urge Congress and the White House to support the reauthorization and expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) -- known as MICHild in Michigan. The governor, state officials and community leaders will discuss the need to safeguard health coverage for Michigan's children and the vital role that SCHIP plays in keeping kids healthy.

Also at the event, David Morse, senior vice president, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, will discuss new research recently released by the Foundation illustrating the success of MICHild and the number of Michigan's children who could be at risk of losing their coverage if the program is not reauthorized and properly funded.

Signed into law in 1997, SCHIP provides states with federal funds to design a health insurance program for vulnerable children. States determine eligibility rules, benefit packages and payment levels. Most kids enrolled in the programs have parents who work, but they either aren't offered health insurance through their jobs, or can't afford the coverage that is offered.

In less than two months, the State Children's Health Insurance Program will expire. President Bush, governors and members of Congress are currently debating how much money to devote to kids' coverage. If Congress and the White House do not reauthorize and provide sufficient funding for SCHIP, children who desperately need health insurance will go without coverage.

What: Press Conference: SCHIP Re-Authorization  
Michigan leaders voice support for SCHIP reauthorization.

Who: -- Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor  
-- Dr. Herman Gray, President & CEO, DMC Children's Hospital of Michigan  
-- David Morse, Senior VP, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
-- Michelle and LaYonna McCullough, MICHild family  
-- Dr. Ronald Davis, President, American Medical Association  
-- Michael Duggan, President and CEO, Detroit Medical Center  
-- Dr. John (Joe) Schwarz, Former US Congressman, State of Michigan

Where: DMC Children's Hospital of Michigan, 3901 Beaubien (on Brush Mall)  
Detroit, MI 48201

When: Wednesday, August 15 at 10:00 AM

This event is a part of Cover the Uninsured, a non-partisan effort led by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to secure health coverage for all Americans. For information on SCHIP, go to

<http://www.CoverTheUninsured.org>.

SOURCE Cover the Uninsured



## 'Care Card' provides deep savings on medical expenses

**GRAND BLANC TOWNSHIP**

**THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION**

Monday, August 13, 2007

**By Shantell M. Kirkendoll**

**skirkendoll@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6366**

GRAND BLANC TWP. - Grocery stores and auto clubs have tried it. Now, a group of doctors is offering a savings program called Care Card Membership, with discounts on throat cultures, office visits and X-rays.

Enrollment began last week at Complete Care Center, 8401 N. Holly Road, the only area facility that honors the card.

The card offers savings of up to 40 percent on health services and office visits for only \$10.

"What we're offering is not an insurance plan," said Dr. Roland Tindle, one of nine licensed medical staff at Complete Care. "Rather, it's a membership program that offers uninsured patients lower cost office visits ... and other services."

He said the office felt obligated to do something for people without health insurance, but the program is open to anyone.

A trip to the doctor's office typically costs \$75-\$100.

After paying a monthly membership fee of \$35 for individuals, patients pay only \$10 per office visit. Covered are an EKG, one X-ray and three lab tests per visit, including urinalysis, complete blood counts, strep screens and others.

Complete Care has its own lab and is open Saturdays. People who sign up by Oct. 1 can avoid paying a \$30 enrollment fee.

A recent analysis of the Genesee County's uninsured and their health habits shows a reliance on the emergency room and about six doctor visits a year.

"For people whose employers can't afford to provide insurance, for children whose parents don't have coverage, for individuals between jobs and others, our membership program offers a workable solution," Tindle said in a statement.

But Linda Hamacher, executive director of the Genesee Health Plan, a county-run plan for the uninsured with no enrollment fee or monthly charges, said adults may not get much bang for the buck with the Care Card.

"This type of coverage may encourage people to drop insurance through their employer (to save money) and opt into a program with very, very thin benefits," she said.

GHP provides care for 26,000 people and over the years has expanded coverage to include office visits, generic prescriptions, some same-day surgeries and physical therapy. To join, individuals must make no more than about \$1,500 a month, or \$18,000 a year.

### QUICK TAKE

#### About Care Card

Complete Care Center, a physician office with its own lab, is offering a membership program designed to help the uninsured. Paying a monthly fee entitles cardholders to discounts on office visits and lab tests. Details: (810) 695-8011 or [www.completecarecenter.net](http://www.completecarecenter.net).

"The people we see can barely pay a co-payment. It's very difficult to come up even with that," said Hamacher, whose 6-year-old GHP is Michigan's largest county-run health plan.

"I'm not trying to sound negative, but it's a 40 percent discount from what?"

Ironically, the uninsured may pay more for drugs and office visits. Doctors and hospitals often charge those with insurance less because insurance companies have negotiated cheaper costs.

Some measures are arising to address the daily needs of the uninsured. Two years ago, the Flint area got its first retail medical clinic: Early Solutions, located on the upper level of Meijer store on Center Road in Burton.

There, a throat culture costs \$20 and a basic office visit is \$49.

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Article published Aug 11, 2007

Study: Early childhood program grads do better as adults  
From the National Institutes of Health

By the time they reached adulthood, graduates of an intensive early childhood education program for poor children showed higher educational attainment, lower rates of serious crime and incarceration, and lower rates of depressive symptoms than did non-participants in the program, reported researchers in a study funded in part by the National Institutes of Health.

The Child-Parent Centers (CPC) program in the Chicago Public School System provided intensive instruction in reading and math from pre-kindergarten through third grade, combined with frequent educational field trips. The children's parents received job skills training, parenting skills training, educational classes and social services. They also volunteered in their children's classrooms, assisted with field trips and attended parenting support groups. The CPC program is distinct from the federally funded Head Start program.

"These results strongly suggest that comprehensive early education programs can have benefits well into adult life," said Duane Alexander, Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the NIH institute that funded the study. "A comparatively small investment early in life is associated with gains in education, economic standing, mental health, and other areas."

The research team that conducted the study was led by University of Minnesota investigators Dr. Arthur J. Reynolds, professor at the Institute of Child Development, and Dr. Judy A. Temple, professor at the Humphrey Institute and Department of Applied Economics. The researchers followed the children from ages 3 or 4 through age 24 to assess the possible benefits of the CPC program in terms of the children's educational achievement, need for remedial education, involvement with the child welfare and foster care system, economic status, involvement with the criminal justice system, health status and mental health. The study appears in the August Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine.

Dr. Reynolds and his coauthors followed a group of 1,539 low-income children in the Child-Parent Center (CPC) program, administered by the Chicago Public Schools in Chicago, Illinois. Roughly 1,000 children in the study were enrolled in the CPC program at ages 3 or 4 and 500 were enrolled in the comparison group, which was made up of children in alternative early childhood education programs. Children in the CPC group were matched to children in the comparison group of similar age and background. The study began following the children in 1985 and 1986. Families moved into and out of the area during the time the study took place, so not all children completed all components of the CPC program. The children in the study were 93 percent African American and 7 percent Hispanic.

Because the study did not assign children randomly to the two groups, it cannot conclusively prove that the CPC program caused the gains observed in its graduates. However, the study results strongly suggest that the program produced lasting benefits — even for children who completed only part of the program. By age 24, for example, children who participated only in the preschool program had lower rates of depression, lower rates of violent crime and incarceration, were more likely to attend 4 year colleges and were more likely to have health insurance than children who did not participate in the preschool program. However, graduates of both the preschool and school age components of the CPC program were more likely to attend college and to be employed full time, and less likely to receive public assistance or to have a disability than those who participated in other programs. Children who participated in only the school age component of the CPC program also showed benefits in adult life. By age 24, these children had lower rates of disability and were less likely to receive public assistance.

"Children who were enrolled in the CPC program were generally more socially engaged and educationally adept," said Dr. Reynolds. "These benefits appear to be derived from early gains made in the CPC program on school readiness, achievement, and parental involvement in the children's schooling."

Established in 1967, the CPC program is currently federally funded through Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act and is still operating in Chicago. The program is implemented by certified teachers, has a low child-to-teacher ratio, and provides intensive parent involvement. Its curriculum includes structured field trips and class activities that emphasize oral and written communication, said Dr. Reynolds. The program also fosters early literacy through conventional classroom activities, in addition to story book reading and language games that help children recognize letters and understand the sounds for which they stand.

In addition to parenting classes, the CPC program offers high school equivalency classes, career development skills workshops, and other professional training.

"The program is an outreach to the parents as well," said Dr. Reynolds. "In order to lift families out of poverty, attention is directed to the whole family."

He noted that past research has shown that completing more schooling is linked with earning a higher income, a decreased involvement in criminal activity and even a decrease in rates of depression.



“Children who participated in this program had a greater recognition that more schooling is the way out of poverty,” he said. “The study is the first to show that large-scale established programs run by schools can have enduring effects into adulthood across a range of outcomes.”

The NICHD sponsors research on development, before and after birth; maternal, child, and family health; reproductive biology and population issues; and medical rehabilitation. For more information, visit the Institute’s Web site at <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/>.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) — The Nation's Medical Research Agency — includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov).

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# The Daily Telegram

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**MONDAY AUGUST 13, 2007** Last modified: *Friday, August 10, 2007 9:13 PM EDT*

## Education programs touted as crime prevention tools

— Advocates discuss funding early education.

By Phil Johnson

Daily Telegram Staff Writer

ADRIAN — State Rep. Dudley Spade, D-Tipton, local law enforcement heads and early education advocates met Friday for a discussion on the necessity of early education and after-school programs as a tool to prevent crime.

A lack of funding for education initiatives was the main concern participants shared with Spade and Nancy Jenkins, district representative for State Sen. Cameron Brown, R-Sturgis, at a community conversation sponsored by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Michigan.

Jenkins described a television commercial where an inspector plugs a leaking dam with a wad of chewing gum.

“That’s a good picture of what Michigan is going through right now,” Jenkins said. “We need to fix the cracks in the dam.”

Lenawee County Sheriff Larry Richardson, Adrian Police Chief Terry Collins, Madison Township Police Chief Gerald Haensler and Morenci Police Chief Larry Weeks represented area law enforcement agencies at the meeting. All stressed the importance of giving children needed opportunities to succeed.

“It becomes very frustrating when you go into a home and see a child and you say, ‘There’s no way. This child has no way of making it in life,’” Weeks said.

Local intervention and educational services Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club and the Washtenaw Regional 4C program backed up law enforcement’s claim of needed services but explained how their various agencies are struggling to perform services with constant reductions in state aid.

Joseph Satterelli, director of the Department of Human Services of Lenawee County, said Child Protective Services is only staffed at 84 percent of its capacity despite a growing workload. Robert Dister, early childhood coordinator at Morenci Schools, echoed Satterelli, saying his program has lost funding and has had to reduce its services.

Along with the importance of early education, after-school programming was also stressed as a deterrent of juvenile crime.

“We kind of think that crime happens at night, in the dark, when evil lurks, but that’s just not the case,” Richardson said.

He said a majority of crimes committed by juveniles take place between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m. He said providing kids with safe after-school activities will keep them out of trouble and save taxpayers money.

But Friday’s common denominator was reduced state funding.

“No one disputes the importance of these programs,” Jenkins said, “but the key, the challenge, is funding.”

Spade told the panel that it is obvious that early education and after-school programming save money in the long term. The problem the state is facing, he said, is determining how to allocate funds where there will be great return, while still addressing current needs.

When you’re looking at a budget that is \$4.5 billion in total, there’s a lot of competing priorities.,” Spade said. “The tendency is to say ‘we have to deal with (early education),’ but it’s a difficult balancing act,” he said. “Where do we put these scarce funds?”

Spade said that despite troubles he is working hard to help a 2 percent increase for licensed child care providers to pass Michigan’s House budget.

Richardson said he is optimistic that change is coming.

“It’s coming, Michigan’s gonna turn around,” he said. “Until then we need to give our children a chance to succeed.”

-- CLOSE WINDOW--

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Article published Aug 12, 2007

## Group taps parent opinion on preschoolers' needs for 'great start' in school days

by Sharon Dargay

COMMUNITY LIFE EDITOR

As parents prepare their children for the start of another school year, Darlene Zimney of Great Start Collaborative - Oakland, says they shouldn't forget their youngest pupils - infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

"What research tells us is that 80 percent of the brain develops by age 3. Education doesn't begin in kindergarten, so what we do from birth, or even in prenatal, gets them ready for kindergarten and for the rest of their lives.

"I think our biggest message is to be aware of the impact of what we do with our young children on their future and ours as a community. We all have to embrace their growth and development. It's that old adage that it takes a village to raise a child. As you get your children ready for school, what about getting your little ones ready?"

Zimney, coordinator, and others involved in the collaborative, want to know what parents think children need for a "great start" on their education. The group began a series of 12 community forums last week that will continue Aug. 20 through Sept. 13 in various locations around the county.

"We don't want to assume what families need," Zimney explained. "We want the parents and other community members to give us their input."

The information gathering will help the collaborative design a strategic plan for coordinating services and support for families with preschool children.

"One thing we're finding is that parents don't know about all the services available," she said, referring to information collected at the first three forums, held in Lake Orion, Ortonville and Holly last week. "Parents don't know where to find out about what programs and services.

"There are a lot of parenting programs in Oakland County. Some are free and some aren't. Some are already filled and some aren't, but parents just aren't connected to it. Most programs have very little money to provide the program, let alone advertise it.

"We want to coordinate services and support. But right now we're finding that many programs are operating in their individual silos and not working with each other so that entire family needs are met."

A \$70,000 grant from the Early Childhood Investment Corporation gave Great Start Collaborative - Oakland its start in 2006. Governor Jennifer Granholm inspired the creation of the corporation a year earlier during her State of the State speech.

The corporation funds Great Start Collaborative groups, which consist of parents, community leaders, and representatives from business, charities, faith organizations and others, to create resources and services that parents of young children need and want. The Oakland group is still in its infancy as it assesses family needs and creates a strategic plan.

"Our strategic plan will be unveiled in January (2008). We've been collecting data as well ... how many young children there are; what the poverty rate is; the rate of teen pregnancies. That report - the status of young children in Oakland County - is a snap shot of how young children fare in Oakland County. It will be available on our Web site."

Zimney hopes incentives, such as a free gasoline card and dinner, will draw parents, caregivers, grandparents and others involved in the welfare of young children, to the forums over the next month.

Parents with young children also can join the collaborative's Parent Coalition, an advocacy group that meets monthly at various locations.

"We had 30 parents at our first meeting and that's pretty good, said Stacey Weaver, who coordinates the parent group. Its next

meeting is Aug. 27 in Lake Orion. Call Weaver at (248) 762-5895 for more details.

"The coalition is just for parents of young children. We're an advocacy group. Children age zero to five don't have much voice," Weaver noted. "And a lot of parents don't know that zero to five is an important time."

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The Detroit News

Monday, August 13, 2007

Macomb Briefs

## **Contract vote set for juvenile center work**

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners is expected to award a \$6.2 million contract to Bernco Inc. on Wednesday for the second phase of renovations to the Juvenile Justice Center in Mount Clemens. Two years ago, phase two carried an estimated price tag of \$2.3 million, but the project has expanded. Macomb County's budget committee will meet at 10 a.m. to consider the contract in the board's ninth-floor conference room at 1 S. Main St. in Mount Clemens.

August 13, 2007

## To Stop Abuse, Hold the Abusers Accountable (3 Letters)

To the Editor:

"The Protection Battered Spouses Don't Need," by Radha Iyengar (Op-Ed, Aug. 7), does not address many of the complexities of domestic violence, arrest policies and domestic violence homicides.

The safety of survivors depends on much more than a mandatory arrest policy. Prosecutors must charge the batterer, judges need to hold batterers accountable, and victims must have access to viable resources.

At the National Network to End Domestic Violence, which represents domestic violence programs across the country, we see how the availability of services like legal advocacy, emergency shelter and affordable housing affect a victim's safety.

Arguments about victims' choices and the policies needed to protect them must be informed at every level by the victims themselves. It is important not to make assumptions about victims' actions without hearing directly from them.

Sue Else

President, National Network to End Domestic Violence

Washington, Aug. 8, 2007

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To the Editor:

Radha Iyengar's study may show a correlation between states' rates of intimate partner homicide and the presence of mandatory arrest laws, but I maintain that it is not a causal relationship. There are other reasons why a batterer murders.

Batterers murder because they believe that if they cannot have the victim, then no one can. The violence and the control are very specific to the person being battered. Mandatory arrests do save lives. It would be a shame for legislators to pursue the removal of arrest laws based on this study.

The laws do not discourage survivors from calling the police. Survivors do not call because batterers are not held accountable for their behavior and because adequate supportive services do not exist.

Homicides have generally decreased in the past 20 years, because greater awareness of the problem of domestic violence has led to the creation of more resources for victims.

If as a society we choose to advance and maintain this progress, domestic violence homicides can end.

Barbara A. Niess

Executive Director

SafeHouse Center

Ann Arbor, Mich., Aug. 9, 2007

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To the Editor:

New Yorkers should be aware that the state has a mandatory arrest policy for domestic violence batterers. Despite Radha Iyengar's findings about intimate partner homicides in states with mandatory arrest laws, mandatory arrest policies in New York City are effective.

In fact, major domestic violence felony crimes in the city, including homicides, have decreased by 20 percent over the last five years.

Since January 2002, the Bloomberg administration has put an innovative approach into effect to combat domestic violence, including digitizing 911 calls, increasing emergency shelter beds, providing direct access to interpreters in all precincts, giving digital cameras to all city hospitals and precincts, and opening the city's first Family Justice Center in Brooklyn, with two more under way.

New York City is working to ensure that families live in homes free from violence.

Yolanda B. Jimenez

Commissioner, Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

New York, Aug. 9, 2007

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Published August 12, 2007



(Photo by Becky Shink/Lansing State Journal)

Spending time together: Helen Rieger (left), 99, smiles with Sally Williams, 93, and her great grandson, Connor Struzinski. Rieger and Williams live in Edgewood Retirement Center and are among a growing number of mid-Michigan seniors transitioning from their own homes to senior living centers.

#### Mid-Michigan elder care database

Find detailed records for assisted living, independent living and nursing home facilities across mid-Michigan at LSJ's [Data Connection](#) or search the database directly by clicking [here](#).

Read more coverage on living longer in mid-Michigan at [The New Age](#).

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**Where should grandma live?**

Families weigh what is best, safest for their aging loved ones

Chris Andrews  
Lansing State Journal

Joyce Felice of Mason was worried about her mother. Living alone in a small home in Paris, Tenn. — more than 600 miles away — with cardiac and vascular issues, Dorothy Norell Norton was vulnerable.

After months of heart-to-heart talks, Norton sold the homestead where she raised her daughter, tended her flower garden and enjoyed the company of lifelong friends. She moved to Lansing and into the Edgewood Retirement Center eight years ago, where Felice was activity director at the time.

Norton says she is glad her daughter persuaded her to come.

"We have musicals. We have a Bible study on Thursdays and Vespers on Sunday afternoon," she said. "The only regret I have is that I didn't come sooner. I'll be here until the Lord calls me home."

Norton also said she realizes how fortunate she was. For many, the process isn't smooth, options are limited and help is hard to find.

Norton is among a growing number of mid-Michigan senior citizens transitioning from their own homes to senior living centers. And that number promises to swell as boomers join the aging ranks.

Knowing when it's time to transition and what your family's needs are is far from a precise science and varies by individual.

The good news is, options for living arrangements are expanding to meet the needs of seniors and their families.

There are independent living facilities, retirement communities, assisted living centers and full-service nursing homes. Expansions of area facilities also are planned. A millage to expand the Eaton County Medical Center was passed Tuesday.

The bad news is, seniors and their families must navigate a largely uncharted maze to find the right options. Waiting lists are common. And for seniors with low incomes, it's even more difficult.

"In some respects, if you have the resources, the higher end assisted living is available, and there are new ones being built," said Donna Hobart, assistant executive director of the Tri-County Office on Aging. "But if you are a lower-income older adult, the subsidized housing is more limited. We need more affordable living in apartments or assisted-living options for older adults."

Michigan has 4,703 licensed adult foster care homes or homes for the aged (as larger senior centers are called), including 202 in the tri-county area. That's not counting housing options that are not required to be licensed because they don't provide direct care.

There are 13 licensed nursing homes in mid-Michigan for people who need a higher level of care.

Finances can be a huge issue in an industry where seniors pay from a few hundred dollars a month for a subsidized apartment to \$70,000 a year or more for a memory-care facility in Michigan.

In some instances, there are waiting lists for the waiting lists for subsidized housing. The challenge is even greater for those with bad credit ratings.

"A lot of times, that stands in the way of moving into appropriate housing," said Miranda Tyson, a medical social worker who assists families in finding housing for seniors.

And no matter your financial situation, experts say, finding the right place takes work.

They advise family members to make unannounced visits at off hours. Ask for a meal. Check inspection reports.

Apply simple sniff and taste tests. What are the odors? How's the food?

"I would see if people are friendly. Are people saying hi? Are there people talking?" Hobart said. "Just sort of like you look at a neighborhood when you're looking to buy a home."

Most of the facilities in the mid-Michigan area have good track records on their inspection reports.

"I feel the majority of our facilities provide excellent care," said Deborah Wood, director of Adult Foster Care Licensing/Homes for the Aged Division in the Michigan Department of Human Services. "We have good oversight, and I think that we, as well as the licensees, do a good job of providing care."

In mid-Michigan, you can obtain lists of facilities from the Tri-County Office on Aging.

For those who can afford it, Burcham Hills Retirement Center offers a broad spectrum of housing options ranging from 38 condominiums to a skilled nursing facility and a memory unit for those with Alzheimer's and dementia.

Jack and Betty Barnes bought a condo there in April 2006, in part because it would force them to start getting rid of their stuff, rather than leaving the task for their children.

They play bridge monthly at "the Big House," as condo dwellers refer to the center up the road, but don't otherwise spend much time there.

"We have a little less space, all on one floor. We have the support of the retirement center if we need it," said Barnes, 86, taking a break from watering his garden on a hot summer afternoon. "And supposedly, we have priority if the time comes when we have to move up to there."

Priority can come in handy at places like Burcham Hills, where waiting lists are the norm. Senior advisors suggest that seniors get on waiting lists before they actually need to make the move.

Executive director Pam Ditri said there's an upside to waiting lists: They offer concrete evidence that people want to live there.

While seniors are often reluctant to leave their homes, many benefit from increased stimulation and better care at senior facilities.

"Some live at home for 10 years and don't exercise or eat well or have companionship, and then they come in, and they suddenly have meaningful relationships, they get healthy meals, have a lot of interaction," Ditri said. "It really makes a big difference to the overall person."

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# The Daily Telegram

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**MONDAY AUGUST 13, 2007** Last modified: *Saturday, August 11, 2007 7:51 PM EDT*

## Editorial: Journey to D.C. raises equal parenting issue

Robb MacKenzie, Robert Pedersen and hundreds of other supporters of equal parenting have seen firsthand the damage Michigan's broken divorce system can cause.

Devoted parents may be limited to having their children four days or fewer per month under typical one-parent physical custody rulings. Children, often taken by one parent as a divorce tactic, may rarely see anyone from an entire set of relatives.

MacKenzie and Pedersen bicycled through Adrian on Saturday en route to Washington, D.C., hoping to publicize a state House bill to change Michigan's custody law and move closer to equal parenting. The bill, HB 4564, has been bottled up in the Families and Children's Services Committee where a similar bill last year was blocked on a 4-4 tie vote when Rep. Dudley Spade, D-Tipton, passed rather than vote.

Seeking equal parenting for fit parents is a cause Pedersen says he's come to believe in the hard way.

"I was essentially blindsided with a divorce," said Pedersen, who recently was named national runner-up in Best Life magazine's Hero Dad contest. "It was a heated divorce primarily because of the child custody dispute. I was essentially told I would have to give her the house or she would go for full custody of the children.

"We live a fantasy that the American legal system is always fair. ... Then I was told there was no way the judge would agree to joint parenting because there was disagreement over custody."

That issue — "disagreement over custody" — makes court-ordered joint parenting infrequent. Despite studies showing children usually benefit from having both parents present and involved, joint parenting was awarded only 23 percent of the time in 2002, according to the Michigan Department of Community Health. Mothers received custody almost 65 percent of the time; dads, just 10.2 percent.

Regardless of gender, Pedersen says the real issue is the effect on children and the rights of fit parents who do not receive near-equal time with their children. That could be changed by HB 4564. In cases in which parents do not reach their own agreement, and neither is deemed unfit, joint parenting would be the norm rather than a rarity.

Opponents including the Michigan National Organization for Women have argued the bill would not give judges enough flexibility and that it could increase domestic violence.

Pedersen disagrees. He says judges will still have the final say, but that guidelines will require clear evidence rather than allegations made in the heat of a divorce battle.

He also notes that Michigan already has numerous laws against domestic violence. Changes needed should be made to those laws — not tacked onto one regarding child custody.

Furthermore, Pedersen points to studies in states with more-equal custody rules that show a decrease in violence. He attributes that to parents being less frustrated when custody is more equitable.

Nobody expects equal parenting in each case. However, 50 percent of all marriages end in divorce, and there's no

basis to think most involve abuse or criminal behavior. Such cases in which one parent is largely excluded ought to be the exception, not the rule.

Polls show state citizens overwhelmingly support equal parenting. Like other civil rights progress, though, changing a biased status quo takes time. Some day, people such as Pedersen and McKenzie will be viewed as leaders for their efforts.

-- CLOSE WINDOW--



## Aid for the poor comes up short

Monday, August 13, 2007

By Christina Hildreth

childreth@citpat.com -- 768-4924

Low-income Michiganders in need of cash -- to keep the lights on or to make emergency home repairs -- may soon have fewer places to turn for help.

Funds for State Emergency Relief will likely run out by the end of the month, according to Department of Human Services officials, leaving the program penniless until the start of the fiscal year Oct. 1.

Jackson-area residents in need of aid would have to seek help from nonprofit organizations, such as the Salvation Army or Community Action Agency.

But they could run into a dead end there, too.

"We're also in a crunch," said Brenda Leonard, Hillsdale County director for Community Action Agency. Leonard handles the agency's emergency relief in Hillsdale, Jackson and Lenawee counties.

Leonard said the agency has some utility assistance available through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but she does not expect the money to last until October.

The Salvation Army is running short, too.

"We don't have a lot of money either at this time," said Virginia Fetterman, director of social services at the Jackson Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army is working on a \$6,000-a-month budget for emergency relief. With payouts ranging between \$200 to \$300 each, the agency may only be able to help about 20 people a month.

"It will definitely put a big hit on us if we are the only ones with money," Fetterman said.

The state emergency-relief program shut down in April as legislators struggled to close the 2006-07 budget. At that time, the Salvation Army was flooded with requests. For several weeks, two employees did nothing but handle utility-assistance requests.

Coming into the fiscal year, the emergency-assistance program was already comparatively short on funds. Last year it had \$155 million to dole out. This year to date, it's only received \$120 million. And more people are asking for help.

"The funding for the program has not kept up with demand," said DHS spokes-woman Maureen Sorbet.

Several state lawmakers are petitioning Washington to release more contingency funds in the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, said Senate Minority Leader Mark Schauer, D-Battle Creek. The federal program gives money to states to help low-income residents cover high utility bills in emergency situations. LIHEAP money could act as a stop-gap until the new fiscal year, legislators say.

"This is a crisis in our state," Schauer said. "The state budget obviously has a crisis of its own."

States have received the federal program's emergency contingency payments in 16 of the program's 25

years of existence, mostly in response to extreme weather conditions or a spike in the cost of fuel. Every year since 2003, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have received at least some emergency contingency funds through LIHEAP, totaling more than \$1.2 billion in assistance.

According to DHS, Michigan has not received any money this year.

A spokesman from U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg's office said the Tipton Republican has not been contacted about releasing the contingency funds.

"States have to appeal to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to see if they qualify for a portion of that emergency funding pool," Walberg spokesman Matt Lahr said. "If they want to talk to their federal representative about that, we'd be happy to assist them."

The only other option to revive the state emergency-relief program, said Schauer, is to raise taxes.

"That would be very difficult to do at this time," he said. "I would be open to doing that, but I question whether my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would even consider that."

Leonard said her agency has seen an upswing in the number of recently unemployed seeking emergency assistance.

"You have to choose between feeding your kids, paying your rent or paying utility bills," she said of those who have recently lost their jobs. "Sometimes you just let (utilities) go."

Fetterman said if all else fails, families can turn to local churches, which sometimes have small amounts of money available for assistance.

But there, families might have to do a lot of front-end work to find available funds, Fetterman said.

"It takes a lot of telephone calls," she said.

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